



# FORUM

Facts, Outcomes, & Research... Useful for Managing

## ESCAPE PIT/DOC WATCH: DATA INDICATES THREE YEARS OF CONTINUED SUCCESS

**“When you come to a fork in the road...Take it.” (Yogi Berra)**

BY CLINT CATRON AND TOM ALDRICH

One key outcome of the Department's Strategic Plan is to maintain a low escape rate from minimum-security facilities and have no escapes from medium, close or maximum security facilities each year. Escapes were last reviewed in the Communique in November 2001. This article presents the most recent data, which highlights the efforts of an Escape Process Improvement Team (PIT) and institutional efforts associated with DOC Watch.

The Department has been tracking escapes by security level since 1986. Security Level 2 includes camps, minimum-security compounds (MI2), and pre-releases (MIP). Security Level 3 includes medium and co-located (MI3) facilities. Security levels 4 and 5 include all facilities that contain close custody housing and intensive management units. Security Levels 2-5 are considered total confinement facilities. Security Level 1, which is work releases (MI1), will be excluded from this presentation, due to the differing dynamics of escapes from work release and the fact that a different RCW covers them.

In January 2000, the Department committed to lowering the escape rate (per 1,000 offenders) from minimum-security facilities by five percent and have no escapes from medium or higher security facilities each year. The PIT was assembled to address the rate of escapes. After in-depth analysis, the escape PIT collectively submitted recommendations to the Office of Correctional Operations. The recommendations included improvements and changes to policies with work crews, employee training, and escape reporting. The PIT also discovered that escaped inmates had a significantly higher rate (44%) of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) detainers than the general population (4%). Changes in classification were made in early 2000, restricting inmates with INS detainers to major facilities for at least six months after intake.

At the same time, institutions took it upon themselves to implement improvements at the local level. Common enhancements were shared at a DOC Watch meeting held in March 2000. Best practices mentioned included:

- Major emphasis put on risk assessments and criminal history, before movement decisions are made.
- Managers performing audits on security checks for line staff to raise awareness and prevent complacency.
- Improved training at the CORE level for line officers, work crews, and contract staff, stressing the seriousness of an escape.
- More thorough orientation for the inmate upon arrival, clearly stating the repercussions and resulting consequences of an escape.
- Improvements to perimeter fences and exit points, as well as heightened awareness of possible escape routes.

These institutional changes, along with improvements in policies and enhancements to classification, appear to have had a direct result on the escape rate. Since the efforts of the Escape PIT and DOC Watch, the escape rate has remained below one escape per thousand inmates for all total confinement facilities.



## FOR YOUR INFORMATION..

### BOOK/PUBLICATION OF THE MONTH

The Influence of Prisons on Inmate Misconduct: A Multilevel Investigation. By Scott Camp, Gerald Gaes, Neal Langan, and William Saylor

[http://www.bop.gov/orepg/oreprml\\_misconduct\\_jq.pdf](http://www.bop.gov/orepg/oreprml_misconduct_jq.pdf)

(This piece is fairly technical but contains useful introductory and concluding remarks and a valuable, current reference list-e.g. gang influences.)

### WEB SITE OF THE MONTH

<http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/e-gov/e-njwebcorrections.htm> – A review of some DOC websites, with some comments on Washington State.

### DEFINITION OF THE MONTH

**Escape:** A person is guilty of escape in the first degree if he or she knowingly escapes from custody or a detention facility while being detained pursuant to a conviction of a felony. - RCW 9A.76.110.

### DOC MONTHLY STATISTICS AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2004

#### CONFINEMENT POPULATION ..... 17,149

Total Confinement ..... 16,004

Work Release ..... 607

Out of State Rented Beds ..... 538

#### COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS POPULATION

ACTIVE SUPERVISION ..... 30,110

RMA ..... 7,890

RMB ..... 6,793

RMC ..... 2,641

RMD ..... 11,149

Unclassified ..... 1,637

MONETARY ..... 2,640

INACTIVE STATUS ..... 16,992

### ESCAPES FROM SECURITY LEVELS 2-5, FOR FY05

	Date	Type	Return
Coyote Ridge CC	07/14/04	Facility	07/15/04
Olympic CC	08/13/04	Facility	-----

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**Total Confinement Escape Rate**  
(Number of Escapes per Thousand Offenders)

